

Application of Teaching Strategies by General Education Teachers in Facilitating Inclusive Education for Children with Intellectual Disabilities – A Survey Study

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Abstract: The main purpose of the present study was to investigate the application of general education in applying teaching strategies/methods towards facilitating inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities at regular schools. The researcher has taken two hundred and ten (N=210) participants from two districts of Andhra Pradesh state for this study. The researcher has used purposive sampling techniques for selecting participants from who are working at regular schools. Data has been collected through a questionnaire developed by the researcher from participants; the data was analyzed and interpreted using non parametric statistical techniques. The results indicated that majority of the general education teachers do not applying of teaching strategies/methods to facilitate inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities at regular schools. The researcher revealed that the general education teachers does not have adequate knowledge on teaching strategies/methods to pay much attention in applying for children with intellectual disabilities at regular classrooms. It is evident from the result that the government must provide necessary in-service training and professional support on teaching strategies/methods to the general education teachers who are handling children with intellectual disabilities in regular classrooms.

Key words: Children with Intellectual Disabilities, General Education Teachers, Teaching Strategies.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education means all children together to attend into regular schools without discrimination in gender or disability, it is reducing exclusion and promoting of all children with disabilities within a wider framework of support in regular schools. Inclusive education is a process in which children with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in all activities of regular school system (Sharma Y., K., & Sharma, M. (2014).

Children with Intellectual Disabilities

Children with intellectual disabilities are members of general education class room in inclusive settings. To remove anxiety of children with intellectual disabilities, the schools shall provide required additional support to participate in a meaningful way in all school or class room activities. Additional support includes curriculum adaptation, preparation of teaching learning materials, using different teaching methods or approaches in the class and also general education teachers can take support from related trained professionals (Sharma & Sharma, 2014) to provide education for children with intellectual disabilities.

Importance of teaching strategies/methods

The general education teachers have to teach all children together in an inclusive classroom. It is very essential that all general education teachers need to know the teaching strategies/methods for applying while educating children with intellectual disabilities that can be accessed by all students including children with intellectual disabilities. It is important that the school should provide enabling experiences so that children experience success in learning and achievement up to their potential. This is only possible if the teachers respond to the diversities present in an inclusive classroom through teaching strategies/methods.

Need and rationale of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the status of general education teachers in applying teaching strategies/methods for facilitating inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities at regular schools. Children with intellectual disabilities are lack in understanding concepts, comprehension, in good communication, academic skills. It is very big task to provide education at regular classrooms. However, the government has giving admission to children with intellectual disabilities into regular schools in order to provide education along with non disabled students. Hence, the general education teachers must have knowledge on teaching strategies/methods to educate children with intellectual disabilities in regular schools.

The government of Andhra Pradesh has appointing block level resource teachers (trained professionals) from the field special education/inclusive education. The block level professionals are identifying children with intellectual disabilities, giving admission into Bavita Centres and providing basic skills and education, thereafter enrolling into regular schools. After enrollment of children with intellectual

disabilities at regular schools, the general education teachers will play very important role in facilitating inclusive education through assessment and identifying educational needs like curriculum flexibility and application of suitable curriculum adaptation methods for children with intellectual disabilities at regular schools.

Review of related literature

The researcher reviewed literature reviews related to effectiveness of teaching strategies as follows.

Demirdag, Seyithan. (2014) explained in his article with regard to effectiveness of teaching strategies for students with learning disabilities in learning science. Students with learning disabilities (SLD) received services either in a resource room, special education or inclusive classroom within the general education classroom. However, many of SLD fall regularly behind their non-disabled peers in regular education class rooms in many subjects including science. Teaching science to SLD in inclusive classrooms is a challenging task for science teachers as the numbers of SLD has increasing. Collaboration among teachers, setting high learning goals, effective teaching strategies, and providing some basic modifications can help SLD be more engaged and succeed in science classes.

Madan, A. & Sharma, N. (2013) published an article on preparing schools to meet inclusive education for children with disabilities. The authors explained in their article that the concept of inclusive education policies and principles are accepted for children with disabilities. The authors guidelines from empirical study which involved common practices for inclusive education in regular schools and they suggested that schools can follow the inclusive education programmes if they have adequate facilities. As per the guidelines for inclusion, the schools should develop teaching strategies for children with individual needs as well as teacher's role and support from parents and peers are also needed.

Objective

To find out the status of general education teachers in applying teaching strategies/methods for facilitating inclusive education to children with intellectual disabilities at regular schools.

Research Question: The researcher will attempted to answer the following research question

Do the general education teachers applying suitable teaching strategies/methods for facilitating inclusive education to children with intellectual disabilities in regular schools?

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher adopted the descriptive survey type design to study the application of teaching strategies by general education teachers for children with intellectual disabilities at regular schools.

Sample and sampling technique

Two hundred and ten (N=210) general education teachers who are handling children with intellectual disabilities along with non-disabled children in regular schools at government and government aided schools in Andhra Pradesh state were selected as participants for this study. The researcher adopted purposive sampling method under non-probability sampling technique to select the general education teachers as participants from regular schools.

Inclusive criteria

Sl. No.	Variables		No. of Samples
1	Gender	Male	138
		Female	72
2	Age	20 yrs. – 30 yrs.	14
		31 yrs. – 40 yrs.	62
		41 yrs. – 50 yrs.	97
		51 yrs. – 60 yrs.	37
3	Academic qualifications	Intermediate/Higher secondary	10
		Graduation	87
		Post graduation	111
		M.Phil/Ph.D	2
4	Professional qualifications	TTC/D.Ed.,	19
		B.Ed.,	180
		M.Ed.	11
5	Teaching experience in handling children with intellectual disabilities	1 yr. – 5 yrs.	56
		6 yrs. – 10 yrs.	35
		11 yrs. – 15 yrs.	15
		above 15 yrs.	0

Development of Questionnaire

The researcher developed following research questionnaires/tools:

Personal Data Sheet – (Part-1)

The researcher developed a personal data sheet to collect the background information of selected participants. It includes name, age, gender, educational qualification, professional qualification, teaching experience in handling children with intellectual disabilities.

Questionnaire on role of general education teachers in facilitating inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities – (Part-2)

The researcher developed questionnaire consisting of 22 items which includes ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ type closed ended questions and Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) and adopted the responsive system described in below table 1 to answer the research question.

Table 1

Response	Score
Yes	1
No	0
Correct Answer	1
Wrong Answer	0

Data collection procedure

The researcher visited to block level education officers of each district for permission to collect data from general educational teachers who are working at government and aided schools in inclusive settings. On receipt of prior approval from block level education officers, the researcher visited to school to school in person and explained the purpose of this study and received teacher's consent through distribution of informed consent and research questionnaire/tool. Thereafter, the researcher has been received 210 responses from the selected participants with complete information as per questionnaires.

Results and Discussion

Research Question

Do the general education teachers using suitable curriculum adaptation methods for facilitating inclusive education to children with intellectual disabilities?

The researcher collected data from general education teachers through a questionnaire consisting of 22 items related to educational assessment, writing and learning skills, teaching principles and strategies, using task analysis and reinforcement, different types of learning and teaching methods, implementation of individualized education programme, preparation of teaching learning materials and using teaching aids, etc., was analyzed to answer the research question.

Results

The researcher calculated frequencies of each item and converted into percentage to know the percentage of general education teachers in applying teaching strategies for children with intellectual disabilities in regular schools, as shown in below table 1.

Table 1

Item wise frequency and percentages of participant's responses

Sl. No.	items	Frequency	Percentage
1	Do you feel, educational assessment is needed for children with intellectual disabilities in inclusive settings?	148	70.47
2	If yes, what is the purpose of assessing children with intellectual disabilities?	85	40.47
3	Which of the following are pre writing skills to children with intellectual disabilities?	50	23.80
4	Which teaching principle is the best to teach concepts clearly?	25	11.90
5	Do you use task analysis in the classroom to teach children with intellectual disabilities?	93	44.28
6	If yes, what is the procedure of using task analysis to teach?	42	20.00
7	Do you agree that some strategies to be followed to teach children with intellectual disabilities?	110	52.38
8	If yes, which of the following strategies are useful to teach?	72	34.28
9	Are you using reinforcement to children with intellectual disabilities in the class?	97	46.19
10	If yes, the process of giving reinforcement in each successful attempt is called.....	4	1.90
11	Give some examples of social reinforcement which you are using in the class?	184	87.61
12	What is the first stage of learning new task introduced to the child for the first time?	105	50.00
13	Do you use teaching methods for children with intellectual disabilities in the class room?	80	38.09
14	Which instructional process, are you applying to all children to learn together?	54	25.71
15	Which method is called as teaching one student to another?	47	22.38
16	Mention the most suited method to teach children with intellectual disabilities in the class.	133	63.33

17	What are the varieties of teaching learning materials used by you in your class?	116	55.23
18	Do you know about individualized Education Programme (IEP)?	86	40.95
19	How do you implement Individual Education Programme (IEP) in your class?	58	27.61
20	Do you prepare any teaching learning materials (TLM) for children with intellectual disabilities in your class?	91	43.33
21	Do you use teaching aids while teaching children with intellectual disabilities in your class?	103	49.04
22	If yes, what type of teaching aids you are using in your class?	95	45.23
		1878	894.18

The total mean value and percentages of participant's response in applying of teaching strategies/methods in regular schools, as showed in the below table 2 and figure 1.

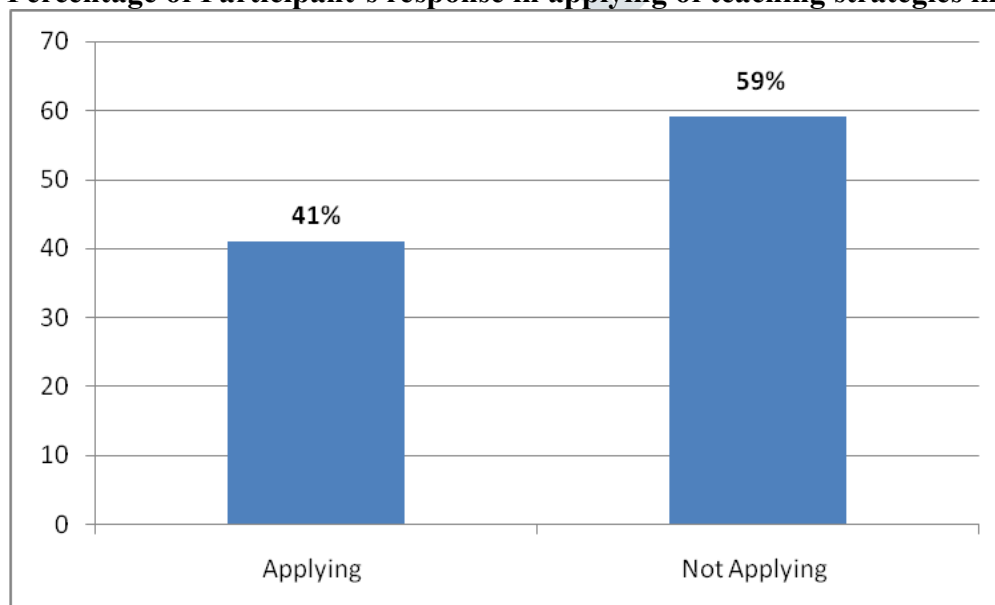
Table 2

Participant's response towards applying of teaching strategies in regular schools

N	Mean	Participant's response in percentage	
		Applying (%)	Not applying (%)
210	8.94	40.64	59.36

Figure 1

Percentage of Participant's response in applying of teaching strategies in regular schools



Discussion and Findings

The researcher has found from the table 2 that only 41% of general education teachers were ***applying*** teaching strategies/methods in regular schools while educating children with intellectual disabilities, those techniques/strategies were learnt from in-service training such as assessment by observation, using simple techniques, using reinforcement, using teaching learning materials, using audio visual aids, etc.,

Whereas, 59% of general education teachers were ***not applying*** any teaching strategies/methods in regular classrooms while educating children with intellectual disabilities, due to lack of knowledge on teaching strategies, insufficient in-service training on strategies, principles and methods as well as lack of support from related professionals, etc.,

Recommendations

- The role of teachers and school administrators are key factor to promote inclusive education, thus the government must given proper orientation and in-service trainings on curriculum adaptation methods for inclusive education.
- During in-service training programme, the professional in special/inclusive education must be involved to develop needed skills to general education teachers.
- The local NGOs must work for mainstreaming of children with intellectual disabilities into regular schools through providing preparatory skills, orientation on teaching strategies/methods to teachers working in inclusive settings.
- The government must take initiation to appoint trained special education professionals in every school to assist general education teachers in teaching strategies/methods for children with intellectual disabilities.
- The government or concerned departments must arrange in-service training programmes on teaching strategies/methods for general education teachers.
- During teacher training programme, the NCTE must include field experience under internship programme to visit different special schools and inclusive schools to get awareness and acquiring skills to handle children with intellectual disabilities.

Suggestions:

- A comparative study may be undertaken to understand the facilitating inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities at regular schools in Andhra Pradesh state and other states in our Country.
- Similar studies may be conducted in future on which the school administrators may also be included as participants in addition to the teachers.
- Conduct a study on experiences of general education teachers towards handling children with intellectual disabilities in inclusive settings

- This study only restricted to government and aided schools. A study may be undertaken on role of teachers who are working in private schools.

Limitations:

- This study has not covered private schools, gurukul schools and tribal welfare schools of Andhra Pradesh state.
- The researcher expected to collect data from 250 samples. But, only 210 participants were responded fully.

Conclusion

The researcher suggested that conduct a comparative study between Andhra Pradesh state with any other state with regard to applying teaching strategies/methods by the general education teachers for children with intellectual disabilities in regular schools. In this present study the researcher revealed that the most of the general education teachers were not applying teaching strategies/methods, due to lack of in-service training, lack of time to learn, lack of support from related professionals. This will effect poor achievements in academics; children get confusion and may left from schools of children with intellectual disabilities.

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